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## OBEY STATEMENT ON RESOLUTION OPPOSING IRAQ WAR ESCALATION

WASHINGTON, D.C. “ During debate in the U.S. House of Representatives today on a resolution opposing the President’s Iraq escalation plan, Seventh District Congressman Dave Obey (D-WI) made the following statement:

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“Mr. Speaker, Four years ago, this Congress voted to authorize the President to engage in a preemptive attack on Iraq, a country that had not attacked the United States. I supported military action against Afghanistan because they gave sanctuary to Osama bin Laden and those who attacked us on 9/11. But I opposed the President's unilateral and preemptive attack on Iraq, because I believed that action would destabilize the Middle East, isolate us in world opinion, and weaken our influence in the world.

“Our opposition was vilified, our patriotism was questioned, and that continues today. We’re told that if we oppose the President's intensification of the war, we are giving aid and comfort to the enemy.

“Well, I for one am tired of those who have been consistently wrong about this war lecturing those of us who have been right from the start. I’m tired of the manipulation of intelligence by this Administration. I’m tired of the stubbornness of an administration that didn't have a clue about the Middle East realities when they got us into this mess, and don't have a clue now about how to get us out.

“Sadly, there will be no happy endings to this war. The President’s policy has done so much damage that there is no good way for us to get out whether it happens in six months, or a year, or five years.

“Our troops won the war, God bless them, but the problem with the President's plan is that it calls upon our troops to do something they do not have the power to do, and that is to convince the Iraqi factions to stop killing each other and work together on a political compromise.

“Instead of the President's surge, in my view, we should set a rough target for repositioning our troops out of the area. We should recognize that Sunni, Shiites and Kurds will never join together in a strong central government. We should tell the Iraqis that if they do not amend their constitution to allow for a loose confederation - with an oil-sharing agreement between the Sunnis and the Shiites - then we will leave them to each other's tender mercies. We should participate in regional discussions with all parties including Syria and Iran. We should resume aggressive leadership to resurrect a meaningful Middle East peace process. And Congress should pass legislation prohibiting an attack on Iran without authorization by this Congress.

“Given the chaos that the Administration's policies have produced, none of these suggestions may work, but all of them would be better than continuing to be stuck in another five-year period in an endless war with endless promises to the American people and with endless failures on the ground.”

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